

Ideas

Public health progress depends upon ideas—new, different, better ways of doing things. And it is not only the big things that demand ingenuity, new concepts, unique relationships. The smaller, everyday problems of public health can be and are being met more efficiently, more economically, more usefully and satisfactorily. Large and small jobs worth talking about and worth sharing with colleagues are being done today and will be done tomorrow. Public Health Reports has been asked by a number of public health people to provide a point for exchange of ideas—this page representing the first attempt. Whether it continues is dependent upon the readers. Your comments . . . and your contributions of ideas are welcome.

—The Editors.

Hospital Conferences

GEORGIA. The problem of obtaining better understanding of hospital programs has been approached through a series of regional conferences in Georgia. These conferences are sponsored by the Division of Hospital Services of the State Department of Public Health and in cooperation with the Division of Medical and Hospital Resources of the Bureau of Medical Services, Public Health Service.

The State has been divided into five hospital regions. In each of these a conference of hospital trustees, hospital administrators, and public health personnel devotes an entire day to round table discussions of common problems and their solutions. Special emphasis is placed on the needs of trustees, a group who have not been particularly pressed to participate in health affairs.

Basic subjects are covered in gen-

eral terms by qualified speakers, following which there is spirited discussion and exchange of ideas by the group. Items discussed included medical staff relationships, money, people, and community resources, the latter also covering public relations.

The conferences aim to establish patterns which will enable all groups concerned to arrive at unified action toward health goals and better hospital services.

"Killer Fish!"

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

*There once was a young larva
named Harvey,*

*Who swam near a fish that
was starvey.*

Before saying who is ya,

He was ate by the 'busia,

*And now Harvey is presarvey
in ancharvey.*

So runs the limerick on the city health department's "Killer Fish!" exhibit which was built for the 1951 Hall of Health at the Los Angeles County Fair.

The feature of the exhibit was several hundred live *Gambusia affinis*, the 1½-inch-long fish with a voracious appetite for insect larvae. The fish were periodically fed live larvae, which were eaten almost instantly upon hitting the water.

On the two side panels of the exhibit were shown clippings from two national magazines describing the year-round Los Angeles mosquito control program, as well as trans-

parencies showing field operations.

In 17 days at the Los Angeles County Fair, it was seen by an estimated 450,000 persons, who asked for, and received, 75,000 free fish to take home for their own private ponds and lakes. The center of the display was dominated by the fish tank and a 2-foot-long wooden fish which continuously leaped at and swallowed an animated larva. In neighborhood distribution during the year, the Los Angeles department gave 78,000 fish to residents for domestic mosquito control, and planted an additional 100,000 in rivers, sloughs, and streams. Routine control work—such as drainage, power spraying (from the department's four fully equipped jeeps), inspections, and mapping of mosquito movements—was also maintained.

The exhibit was designed by the health education division of the department and staffed by the mosquito control section. At the recent annual meeting of the American Public Health Association the exhibit received a citation of merit.

School Nutrition

FLORIDA. Most of the schools of Sarasota and Manatee Counties are participating in a public health nutritional program which goes beyond the school lunch concept. Students who appear to be below par physically, mentally, or emotionally are selected and screened by the teacher, nurse, and physician. Hemoglobin,



Los Angeles City Health Department photograph (by Seibelman).

The Los Angeles City Health Department's County Fair Exhibit

height, weight, and hookworm tests are done periodically.

The public health nurse visits the homes to explain the program and to see that the pupils get enough sleep, rest, recreation, and food. At school pupils are given vitamins with fruit juice or milk daily and a good meal at noon. Some schools provide breakfast when children do not get sufficient food at home.

Infant Measurement

FRESNO, CALIF. Problem: Un-suitable space in health center for measuring infants during well-child conference. Solution: Wall cabinet measuring table utilizing laboratory sink space not needed during clinics.

The baby-measuring table essentially is a wooden wall cabinet frame to which a shelf is hinged. There are folding legs to allow the shelf to be supported by the drainboard but to clear the swing spout of the mixing faucet. A peg board on the front of the cabinet can be used for draining laboratory glassware.

The model was conceived by Mrs. Lois Simpson, a public health nurse, and Mrs. Walter Rhode, and was built by Walter Rhode, construction foreman of the O'Neill Ranch, site of the Fresno County Health Center.



M/S Hygiene—Floating Health Center

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA. A familiar and comforting sight to many residents of southeastern Alaska is the *M/S Hygiene*, floating health center of the department of health. Residents are told in advance when and how long the *Hygiene* plans to be in port so that they can arrange to attend clinics.

The *M/S Hygiene* carries a captain, crew, and chef, and is staffed with a physician, nurse, dentist, X-ray and laboratory technician, and secretary. Staff members meet with community leaders, and in many of the villages, residents have set up

health councils to carry out programs outlined with the help of the *Hygiene's* staff. Programs have covered sanitation, protection of water supplies, isolation of tuberculous patients, and care of the sick in the home.

In addition to regular clinics and chest X-rays, stress is put on prenatal and well-baby conferences, postpartum services, special instruction for midwives, and health education programs for children and adults. Laboratory services, including blood tests, are done aboard ship so that treatment or instructions may be given to the patient before the vessel leaves port. Water samples are also tested during the visit. Reports are furnished to the itinerant nurse for her information in follow-up, and the immunization status of preschool and school age groups is checked.

The *M/S Hygiene*, a converted 114-foot military craft, has been in service since 1945. It is one of five mobile units. These units, the Alaska Territorial Department of Health feels, have proved effective in providing a generalized health service for isolated communities in locating and bringing under treatment unknown cases of tuberculosis, in finding cases needing hospitalization because of crippling conditions due to disease or accident, and in uncovering environmental problems in need of intensive public health service.

